

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Celebrate God's love!	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles	SPARK RESOURCES: None
CELEBRATION CANDLE JARS: Kids make candlelights to welcome Jesus.	SUPPLIES: Heart stickers, confetti, small paper cups	SUPPLIES: Small dry jars, tea light candles, tissue paper scraps, scissors, liquid starch (or a decoupage solution), empty yogurt containers or paper cups, foam paint-brushes, pipe cleaners (chenille craft stems) or wire, jeweled pieces or sequins, matches
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God loves us . . . so celebrate!	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
IT'S A WRAP!: Kids make their own wrapping paper.	SUPPLIES: Assorted boxes and containers, nativity scene figures	SUPPLIES: White or brown butcher paper, brown and white paper lunch bags, green, red, and other colors of acrylic or tempera paint, shallow pans or plastic plates, a variety of "ordinary" objects to use for painting and stamping wrapping paper (shoe bottoms with a design, rubber band balls, kitchen utensils like potato mashes or whisks, bathtub "scrubbies," sponges), scissors, newspaper, pencils
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: We celebrate with all of God's people.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
STARRY, STARRY NIGHT: Kids create a large mural of the Christmas story.	SUPPLIES: Star-shaped cookies, napkins	SUPPLIES: Roll of white butcher paper, scissors, paints, brushes, glue, glitter, pieces of fabric, garland, burlap, sample artwork of the Nativity, a print of Vincent Van Gogh's artwork titled "Starry Starry Night"



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit www.wearesparkhouse.org to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Sparkhouse Digital annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.

Workshop Focus: Celebrate God's love!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Advent and Christmas Storytelling

Set Up: Make sure you have several heart stickers for each kid. Pour a small amount of confetti into each cup.

Activity Instructions

Hi everyone! Welcome to Art Workshop today. Does anyone know what this season of the church year is called? (Advent) Right! We're in the season of Advent, the four weeks leading up to one of my favorite holidays, Christmas! How many of you love Christmas, too? It's the day we celebrate the birthday of Jesus.

Let's take out our Spark Story Bibles and find Jesus Is Born on page 212. Now let's see if we can retell the story by looking at the pictures. Allow time for the kids to look over the story, retelling it in their own words by looking at the pictures.

This is a story about celebrating, isn't it? Celebrating a special gift from God, Jesus. As a reminder for each of you of God's special gift, I have a heart sticker that I want to put on your hands. When you see this heart today, I hope it makes you happy! And just to get our Christmas celebration off the ground, here is some confetti to throw in the air on the count of three. One . . . two . . . three!

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

Heart stickers

Confetti

Small paper cups

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Celebration Candle Jars

Set Up: Cut tissue paper into squares and rectangle pieces. Pour liquid starch into the yogurt containers or cups. Set all supplies on the worktable, with one jar per spot where kids will have room to work. Make a sample Celebration Candle Jar to show the kids. Check for fire code restrictions if you plan to have kids light their tea light candles as part of the Wrap Up today. Print a copy of a note the kids can take home that reminds them to never light a candle without an adult's permission or presence.

Activity Instructions

Gather the kids around the worktable and show them the sample Celebration Candle jar you have made.

Everyone is in a mood to celebrate during Advent and Christmas, and these Celebration Candle Jars will be something you can hang from a tree branch outside to welcome everyone to your home during this festive season.

1. Have each kid measure a craft stem or piece of wire to go around the jar top several times, allowing enough wire to leave a piece for hanging the jar. This may take one or more pieces of pipe cleaner or wire, depending on the size of the jar and the length of the wire.
2. Now let the kids thread different beads, jeweled pieces or sequins onto the wire in a random pattern. It isn't necessary to cover the entire wire with beads, and a random pattern is as beautiful as a design.
3. When kids are happy with their wires, show them how to wrap the wire around the jar top several times, twisting the ends at two sides of the jar. Be sure to leave enough wire (or add another piece of wire) for hanging.
4. Demonstrate how to brush liquid starch and then lay tissue paper scraps on a section of the jar. Overlapping the tissue paper makes new colors.
5. Once the entire jar is covered with tissue paper, have kids set the jars aside to dry.
6. Add a tea light candle to each jar.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Small dry jars, 1 per kid
Tea light candles, 1 per kid
Tissue paper scraps
Scissors
Liquid starch (or a decoupage solution)
Empty yogurt containers or paper cups
Foam paintbrushes
Chenille craft stems or wire
Jeweled pieces or sequins
Matches

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page to this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Your Celebration Candle Jars are beautiful! One of the reasons we see so many candles during this season of the year is that the candlelight can shine brightly into the darkness. It's a joyful sign to see a candle burning in the night. How does Jesus' birth make you joyful? *(God gave us his best gift—his son, Jesus. That makes us happy!)* **How do you and your family celebrate the birth of Jesus?** *(Allow time for kids to discuss their family traditions, and be sure to add some traditions of your family.)* **Today we heard the story of Jesus' birth. We threw confetti and made special celebration candles to celebrate God's love.**

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

If it will not violate a fire code at your church, light one or more of the tea light candles during your prayer time today. Ask the kids to add to your prayer when you pause:

Dear God,

Thank you for all of these kids

And for everything you give us:

(pause for kids to add their prayers)

We pray in the name of Jesus,

Amen.

Workshop Focus: God loves us . . . so celebrate!

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Advent and Christmas Storytelling

Set Up: Put one nativity figure in each box or container and close the lid. (Ideally, you will have enough boxes and figures so that each kid can open one.) Set the boxes in a pile in the center of the meeting space

Activity Instructions

Welcome to Art Workshop today! I'm so glad you're here with us. I have a HUGE pile of boxes here, don't I? I wonder what's inside . . . Well, let's see what our Bible story focus for today is. Maybe that will give us a clue. Can you turn to page 1130 in your Spark Bibles? Let's see . . . that is the second chapter of Luke. Who might like to read Luke 2 starting at verse 1 and ending at verse 20? Allow time for kids to read. Invite kids to use the Spark stickers to mark passages of interest.

Let's talk about the Christmas story. What is your favorite part? Allow time for kids to share their thoughts. **I wonder if these boxes have anything to do with the Bible story. Should we open them and see?** Hand the boxes to the kids to open and then have them put the Nativity scene together. **There! It looks great, doesn't it?**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Assorted boxes and
containers
Nativity scene figures

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

It's a Wrap!

Set Up: Cover the worktable with newspaper. Mix and pour the assorted paint colors into the shallow plates or trays. Assemble the household items to be used for stamping. (Tip: You can cut sponges into shapes using cookie cutters as a pattern; then glue the sponge shapes to one end of a paper tube or thread spool for easier stamping.)

Activity Instructions

It's fun to get presents, isn't it? Today in Art Workshop we're going to make our own wrapping paper, using all of these interesting things to stamp our designs!

Demonstrate how to dip and press each of the items you have collected into paint and make your design on scrap paper or even on the newspaper you used to cover the worktable. Give kids assorted lengths of paper and the paper lunch bags. Have kids label their paper with their name. Let them have fun stamping and printing their own wrapping paper designs.

I hope your family has fun wrapping presents with the wrapping paper you've made today! We celebrate Jesus' love by giving gifts. Christmas is a great time to help others. (Find out about service projects at your church that you can share with the kids.)

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

White or brown butcher paper
Brown and white paper lunch bags
Green, red, and other colors of acrylic or tempera paint
Shallow pans or plastic plates
"Ordinary" objects to use for painting and stamping wrapping paper (shoe bottoms with a design, rubber band balls, kitchen utensils like potato mashes or whisks, bathtub "scrubbies," sponges)
Scissors
Newspaper
Pencils

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page to this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Hum the tune of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and invite the kids to join in, then teach them this variation on the words and sing it through together:

**Jesus' birthday, celebrate!
All the fun, it's hard to wait,
Friends and family, church bells ring,
Happy carols, people sing,
Jesus' birthday, celebrate!
All the joy, it's hard to wait.**

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Ask the kids to join you in a circle and place the nativity scene you built together in the center of the circle. **Would someone like to start a prayer today to thank God for the gift of his Son, Jesus? I can add the Amen when we are done.**

Workshop Focus: We celebrate with all of God's people.

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Open the Bible

Advent and Christmas Storytelling

Set Up: *Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

Activity Instructions

Welcome! I'm so glad to see all of you in our Art Workshop today. We're going to celebrate and I can't wait. If you have your Spark Story Bible or your Spark Bible, I'd like all of us to find the story of Jesus' birth. Who remembers what book in the Bible has the story of Jesus' birth? That's right. It is the book of Luke. So if you have your Story Bible, look for Jesus Is Born on page 212. Or if you have a Spark Bible, look for Luke 2:1-20 on page 1130. Let's review the story together.

Pair older and younger kids together to talk about the story, using these questions to guide them:

Where did Mary and Joseph travel? Why? *(to Bethlehem, to be counted)*

When the baby Jesus was born, where did they put him? *(in a manger)*

Who told the shepherds the news? *(angels singing in the night sky)*

Who were the first visitors to see the baby Jesus? *(the shepherds)*

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Star-shaped cookies
Napkins

If you had been a shepherd, how would you have felt when you knelt down and saw Jesus in the manger?

Invite kids to use the Spark stickers to mark passages of interest. After kids have talked about these questions, share the star-shaped cookies.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Starry, Starry Night

Set Up: Find a place to display a poster or book of Van Gogh's "Starry Starry Night" print as well as the Nativity sample. Identify a wall where you can display the completed mural. Arrange a few tables with supplies and tools around the room for kids work in small groups together.

Activity Instructions

Have you noticed all of the Nativity scenes in this room? There are pictures of artist's visions of the night that Jesus was born. In Art Workshop today we're going to create our own large nativity mural to share with the rest of the church! I've set supplies around the room at different work stations. Let's take a minute to talk about how we could make some cool parts of this story with color, texture, and different kinds of materials.

Brainstorm ideas together, showing the kids the different materials you have collected. Talk about how they might use different mediums: **Look at this garland. Could it be part of an angel's wings or a halo? What about this burlap? Maybe it could be the blanket on the donkey's back.** Once you have all looked at the materials, help kids divide into groups representing these parts of the story:

- the stable
- animals in the stable
- shepherds and sheep
- Mary and Joseph
- the manger and baby Jesus
- the angels
- the stars in the night sky

Point out the Van Gogh art to kids to show one method for making the night sky. Let the kids get to work, and help them as needed to cut out, glue, or mount their pieces of the story onto the larger pieces of mural paper. By creating the mural in sections, it will be easier to reassemble and display in a church hallway or meeting room.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies:

Roll of white butcher paper
Scissors
Paints
Brushes
Glue
Glitter
Pieces of fabric
Garland
Burlap
Artwork of the Nativity
Print of Vincent Van Gogh's artwork titled "Starry Starry Night"

Wow! Your visions of the story of the night Jesus was born are so colorful and so amazing. I know that people in our church will enjoy seeing this mural! They can learn more about Christmas from us and our artistic vision! We celebrate with all of God's people.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page to this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up. Carry the completed mural pieces to the chosen location in your church and have the kids help you mount the mural. Once the mural is up, stand together and sing. **What are some of your favorite Christmas carols that tell about Jesus?** (*Silent Night, Away in a Manger, O, Little Town of Bethlehem*) **Let's sing together to dedicate our mural!**

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Once you have sung a carol or two, ask the kids to hum the tune to Silent Night as you pray:

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus!

Thank you for this time of year

When we remember your gift of love and share the story of your love with others.

Ask kids if there is anything they would like to add to your prayer today, then close.

Amen.